

POUDH POLICY
THE POLICY OF SYMPATHY

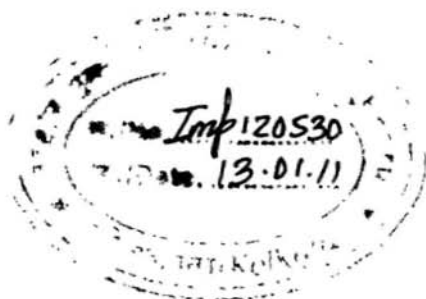
OUDH POLICY THE POLICY OF SYMPATHY.

BY

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A volere che una Setta o una Republica viva lungamente, è necessario ritirarla spesso verso il suo principio.—*Machiavelli Disc iii*—1.

The continued success of England's Government, as it is now administered in Oudh, will be a standing proof, that, in spite of by-gone animosities, and of the broadest differences of race, religion and social usage, a generous and trustful rule is the surest way to make a loyal and dutiful people.—*Lord Canning's speech to the taluqdars—17th April, 1861.*



I DEDICATE THIS ESSAY,
UNWORTHY THOUGH IT BE OF THEM,
TO
ALL WHO LOVE OUDH,
FOR ITS OWN SAKE
AND FOR THE SAKE OF THE GOOD WORK WHICH
BRITISH RULE IS DOING IN IT;
AND IN PARTICULAR TO
WILLIAM CHARLES BENETT,
THE FATHER OF OUDH HISTORY,
THE CHAMPION OF OUDH POLICY,
MY MASTER, AND CONSTANT KIND FRIEND.

sharp ultimatum and direct intervention. The nawabs had renounced responsibility; political power was passing over to the barons; and disorder had become almost chronic when the British government—to quote Lord Dalhousie's words—realised its guilt before God and man, in sustaining any longer an administration fraught with suffering to millions.

The state of Oudh before annexation has been portrayed by Colonel Sleeman, General Outram and General Low, officers celebrated in their day for kindly regard towards native states; and even at the distance of fifty years the imagination is shocked by the picture. It shows a king buried in the women's apartments, associating only with eunuchs, fiddlers and singers, accessible for business to none but the minister, to him but rarely; a minister, untrained in affairs, exposed to the pressure of a profligate and venal court, sharing with others the sale of offices to the amount of £200,000 a year; an army of 60,000 men, ragged and rapacious, let loose upon the country with leave to plunder; the country studded with large

earthen forts in dense bamboo hedges, the seat of resistance by the chieftains to one another and the officials of the court; the revenue farmed to court favourites and contractors who were lent the services of the troops; appointments regarded as licenses to rob the weak and helpless; the wildest extravagance in Lucknow, and in the districts cannonading and desultory fighting, murder and rapine, raid and counter-raid, extortion, torture and cruel mutilation, the selling of prisoners into slavery and the depopulation of whole tracts of country. Outside Lucknow there were no courts of justice, and Lucknow justice was openly bought and sold; the total expenditure on justice in Oudh was £1,600 a year; the administration of civil justice was leased to the favourite fiddler of the king. Vast sums were spent on the palaces of the capital, but other public works were neglected; the only metalled road in the country was that connecting Lucknow and Cawnpore. The capital relied for its intelligence on a host of news-writers, living on corruption—the power of appointing them

was leased for £10,000 a year—and the worst crimes were often not reported. Nevertheless in one year (1854) the resident got information of no fewer than 212 dacoities or armed robberies, with 1,391 casualties, 128 villages burned and 454 persons carried forcibly away. Only on the estates of powerful barons able to defend their people were prosperity and peace to be found. The fertile soil ached under the burden of armed men.*

The open reluctance of the British to adopt extreme measures against rulers, who, however regardless of the interests of the people, had ever been faithful to the sovereign power, encouraged a belief in Lucknow itself that the court of directors had on some occasion

* The figures of disarmament after the mutiny are instructive. Up to the end of the year 1860 no fewer than 1,635 forts were demolished, while 720 cannon, 192,183 firearms and over 250,000 other weapons were surrendered. Large numbers of weapons, for which no figures are available, were subsequently given in or confiscated.

One prominent result of anarchy was the crowding of villages along the border on the British side. Census and settlement figures shew how the people streamed back to Oudh after annexation.

forbidden annexation in any event ; but annexation did not take the people by surprise. It had been expected on the death of Nasir-uddin Hyder (1837), and that king had boasted that he would be the last of his line. The visits and warnings of Governor-Generals, the increasing interference of British residents, and Colonel Sleeman's tour through Oudh had all accustomed the people to the prospect of a change of government. The barons, indeed, would suffer from the establishment of a strong central power, but most of them were Rajputs whose sympathies had lately been won by the British. Only a few weeks before annexation a body of Mahomedan fanatics had, with the open connivance of the court, attacked the Hanuman Garhi, the famous Hindu temple at Ajodhya. Raja Man Singh immediately took up its defence ; other Hindu barons sent their levies to assist him ; and a religious conflict had almost begun "likely," as Lord Dalhousie said, "to call for a very prompt and summary settlement of the Oudh question," when the resident, General Outram, intervened with

troops under British officers. This incident was fresh when the king was deposed, and no passion of pity for a fallen house, or fear of the British government, swept the barons into resistance.

Proclamations were issued by the resident and the king; a strong British force was in the neighbourhood; and Oudh passed peacefully under British rule. The king did not resist, but he would not negotiate. He was offered a treaty securing to him and his descendants for ever the title and honours of king, an allowance of £120,000 a year, and sovereign powers within the palace and royal parks* at Lucknow; but he refused to sign away his kingdom or to remain in it, the shadow of a name. He went to Calcutta, from which place he sent his mother, son and brother to England in a last and vain endeavour to plead his case at the feet of the throne.

The resident's proclamation had promised that the revenue should be determined on a fair and settled basis, that the gradual improvement

*Bibiapur and Dilkusha.

of the Oudh territories should be steadily pursued, that justice should be measured out with equal hand, that protection should be given to life and property, and that every man should enjoy thenceforth his just rights without fear of molestation. The instructions for the organisation of the new province were copious and included special directions to deal tenderly with vested interests, to give employment freely to the officials of the late government, and to conciliate by liberal concessions all who might suffer in pocket or esteem by annexation. The task was severe, and the staff was unequal to the burden. The great personal influence of General Outram, his sagacity and his experience, carried the administration over the first difficulties ; but when his health broke down and he was relieved by Mr. Coverley Jackson, an experienced revenue officer and thorough doctrinaire, confusion crept in, and the administration was crippled by controversy and indiscipline. The claims of the army were partially settled, but the claims and pressing necessities of the pensioners, nobles and officials

of the old regime fell out of sight, and the family of the king were neglected and even exposed to discourtesy. The native officials brought over from the Agra province were arrogant and corrupt, and some European officers, trained in the Thomasonian school, were harsh towards the aristocracy of Oudh. The impression soon got abroad that Government desired to destroy or depress the influential classes, and this impression was confirmed by the proceedings in the settlement of the land revenue.*

The instructions had contemplated a settlement, village by village, with the parties in possession, but they went on to qualify and

* The bearing of revenue policy upon the mutiny is now beyond dispute. The death-bed utterances of Sir Henry Lawrence will not be forgotten. He spoke of the injudicious method in which native landholders had been dealt with by the Government, and amongst other things he said more than once with great emphasis, "It was the John Lawrences, the Thomasons, the Edmonstones (and others) who brought India to this"—Forrest's History of the Indian Mutiny, Vol I, page 261.

[For an account of the history of the revenue systems of the United Provinces the reader is referred to the historical summary in the administration report, United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, 1901-02, page 5, *et seq.*]

specialise the meaning of the term possession. Their effect, broadly stated, was to oust the barons or powerful landowners and to settle direct with what were called the village proprietors, *i.e.*, persons who in many cases had parted with proprietary right for consideration, or had accepted a subordinate position for the advantage of protection by a powerful landowner. The powerful landowners were called taluqdars, whether they were purchasers, or officials who had built up their estates by force and fraud, or whether they were chieftains established on the land for centuries. The latter class was far the more numerous in Oudh, but this important fact was overlooked at the time ; nor was any attention paid to prescriptive rights, or the rights of purchasers for value. The result can best be told in the official statement of the case written after the adoption of a different policy.

“A settlement, village by village, of a province where hundreds of villages had for years been grouped into single taluqas and never borne any fixed assessment, coupled with

an enquiry into the right of proprietorship in a large proportion, was an Herculean task. There was no time for it, and two years would not have sufficed to perform it properly. The consequence was that officers thinking naturally from the instructions and text-books that had been supplied them that they would keep on the safe side by going against the taluqdars, not only excluded them in favour of village proprietors of really independent origin, but often deprived them of their own hereditary villages which their ancestors had actually founded.

“So impressed, indeed, were the authorities with the idea that it was their bounden duty to exclude taluqdars, that they were not satisfied with giving redress to those who applied for it, but they would not permit the village proprietors to decline the proffered benefits. Of this, Colonel Barrow, who settled the district of Salone, the largest in the province, furnishes a remarkable instance: At the outset of the summary settlement, notwithstanding the proclamation issued informing dispossessed proprietors that they would be

restored, few came forward, and the summary settlement was completed, leaving the great taluqdars pretty much as we found them. When this, however, became known to superior authority, explanation was required why a taluqdari settlement had been made contrary to the express order of government. The settlement was cancelled. Inferior proprietors were diligently searched out and engaged with, and the taluqdars were almost entirely dispossessed.

“In the Baraich division the proprietary communities had never been very numerous or strong and the petty zemindari estates had so long been incorporated in the larger taluqas, that the traces of original and independent right were very faint, and Mr. Wingfield did not feel himself called on to revive it. Consequently the settlement was nearly as much taluqdari as it is now; but he recollects the dismay of the deputy commissioners in not finding the village coparcenaries they had been led to expect in all taluqas.

“In other parts of Oudh, and as Colonel Barrow has shown in Salone, had officers

confined themselves to redressing the wrongs of those who at first voluntarily came forward, we should have deprived the taluqdars only of those villages which had recently by force and violence been brought into their taluqas ; but so pressing were the invitations addressed to the tenantry, and so easily were their pretensions admitted, that hundreds of those who had lived happily for generations under the taluqdar and at first never thought of separating from him, could no longer resist the temptation to enter into direct engagements with the state. In fact we put it into their heads to set up for proprietors—an idea which would not otherwise have occurred to them. This is now admitted by many of them, who complain of different policy we have since pursued.”*

At the time of annexation 23,543 villages were in the possession of taluqdars, and 13,178 villages were in the possession of small proprietors. The summary settlement transferred no fewer than 9,903 villages from taluqdars to

* Blue-Book No. 426 (c) of 1861, p. 17.

village proprietors. And this high-handed action was accentuated by unduly high assessments of land revenue and by the imposition of rates for the maintenance of village servants, who had previously been remunerated by grants of land.

By the beginning of 1857 the province was ripe for revolt. No aristocracy has ever liked the ways of a bureau, "the beast with a pen" according to Stein, "the conceited omniscient professors behind the green table" according to Bismarck; and Oudh had had a full dose and more of a bureaucratic regime. The influential classes were sullen and resentful. The Mahomedans were angered further by the rumours of impending war with Persia. In Lucknow an attempt was made to implicate the late king's brother in rebellion; at Fyzabad a maulvi preached religious war against the British; in another district the British district officer was killed by a notorious Mahomedan outlaw. Brigandage increased and the province was disquieted, but the officials still wrote reports and quarrelled with one another. Such

was the position when, in March of that year, Sir Henry Lawrence was appointed chief commissioner. At once he grasped the situation. Lawlessness was put down with a firm hand; complaints were promptly investigated; pensions were paid up; and employment was found for many discharged officials and soldiers. British officers were called in to receive personal instructions, and were specially directed to treat Indian gentlemen courteously and considerately; and the barons were quieted by the assurance that the injustice of the summary settlement would soon be rectified. Within a month a new spirit had run through the administration, and the chief commissioner was free to prepare for the gathering storm which he had forecasted with wonderful accuracy twelve years before.

The mutiny broke at Meerut on the 10th May. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Sir Henry Lawrence realised at once the meaning and the range of the catastrophe, which had been foreshadowed by disturbances in Lucknow and elsewhere. He decided to hold Lucknow

at all costs and against any odds, partly for reasons of prestige, and partly with a view to detain rebel troops who would otherwise have made for Delhi. The Machchli Bhawan, an old fort commanding the city, was strengthened and strongly garrisoned; and the country was kept open by movable columns in order to get in supplies. These were poured in by friendly barons and other well-wishers, including the priests of the Hanuman Garhi. No effort was spared to preserve the loyalty of the troops, and some faithful soldiers were loyal to the end; but no efforts could be generally successful when mutiny was in the air. On the 30th May the Lucknow regiments mutinied, and within a fortnight the troops at out-stations had followed suit. Nevertheless, a whole month was gained during which the Residency position was fortified, provisioned and prepared for a long siege. The barons with rare exceptions helped the European fugitives to safety,* and

* "The brave and turbulent population of Oudh with a few exceptions treated the fugitives of the ruling race with a marked kindness."—Forrest's *History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. I, page XV.

the rebels got no following in the country. It was not until the end of June that the enemy dared to approach Lucknow in force. They were met on the 30th June at Chinhut, where, owing to a series of blunders and mishaps, the British suffered an untimely reverse, which might have been decisive had the enemy followed up their success. Next night the Machchli Bhawan was vacated and blown up, the whole British force was concentrated on the Residency, and the siege began.

The moving story of the defence of Lucknow has been told by many but by none more fully than General McLeod Innes, one of the bravest and most skilled of its defenders.* The position covered some 35 acres; the enemy were entrenched at a distance from the defences which was never more than 120 yards, and on one side was only 13 yards; the garrison num-

* "Lucknow and Oudh in the Mutiny," by Lieutenant-General McLeod Innes, V. C., a book distinguished for its lucid exposition, accuracy and profound knowledge of the political situation. The letter of Raja Man Singh to his brother taluqdars, published at the end of the work, is one of the most remarkable and instructive documents of the time.

bered 3,000, of whom only 1,720 were combatants including 712 loyal native soldiers ; yet from the 1st July until the 25th September, through sweltering heat and tropical rains, the defenders kept the rebel armies and the population of a vast city at bay. The fire of the enemy was incessant ; mining operations were active and continuous ; and several combined assaults were made by numbers that seemed overwhelming. On the 25th September, after many tough engagements and desperate street-fighting, Havelock's relieving force entered the Baillie Guard gate. An extended position including the palaces and houses on the river front was then taken up, and this was held against all attacks until Sir Colin Campbell's relief on the 17th November. Sir Colin Campbell condemned and abandoned the Residency position, * and the combined forces retired to the

* It is a curious though useless fact, not published hitherto, that (more than 20 years before) King Nasir-ud-din Hyder had proposed to absorb the Residency in his palace grounds (Farhat Buksh) and build a new Residency at Char Bagh, the present railway junction, near the Alam Bagh. [Letter from H. T. Prinsep to Major John Low, dated 25th August 1831. Blue Book No. 130 (c) of 1834.]

Alam Bagh, a country-house in a walled garden outside the city, on the Cawnpore road. Here General Outram was left with a sufficient force until the commander-in-chief could return in strength to capture Lucknow. The city was finally occupied on the 14th March 1858, but the enemy escaped in force, and the rebellion was not crushed until the end of the year.

Only three barons joined the rebels at the outset; the remainder were neutral (or actively helped the British) until Havelock was compelled to fall back out of Oudh on Cawnpore in his first attempt to reach Lucknow. The province was then occupied by the enemy, and most of the barons accepted the authority of the Begam, the nominal sovereign at the capital. Few, however, took active part against the British, and some kept up correspondence with the garrison. Sir Henry Lawrence, had he lived, would have secured the loyalty of many; but he was mortally wounded on the second day of the siege and there was none to carry on his policy. At a later stage, when Lucknow had been finally captured, a clear and

conciliatory pronouncement would probably have brought in most of the barons, but Lord Canning's proclamation, confiscating all rights in the soil—except the rights of the “loyal five” (Balrampur, Katiari, Sissendi, Gopalkhera and Morawan)—and offering but vague assurances, only drove them into deeper rebellion. This much debated proclamation was the first step towards a new settlement policy favourable to the barons, who had been “honourable enemies,”* but it excited suspicions

* “The Governor-General entirely agrees with you (*i.e.*, Sir J. Outram) in viewing the taluqdars and landholders of Oudh in a very different light from that in which rebels in our old provinces are to be regarded. The people of Oudh had been subjects of the British Government for little more than one year when the mutinies broke out; they had become so by no act of their own. By the introduction of our rule many of the chiefs had suffered a loss of property, and all had experienced a diminution of the importance and arbitrary power which they had hitherto enjoyed; and it is no marvel that those amongst them who had thus been losers should, when they saw our authority dissolved, have hastened to shake off their new allegiance.”—Page 3 of Parliamentary Papers, 289 of 1858.

The chief commissioner (Sir J. Outram) had said:—

“He is of opinion that the landholders were most unjustly treated under our settlement operations, and even had they not been so, that it would have required a degree of fidelity on their

and fears which some months' persuasion scarce availed to allay. Eventually most of the barons tendered submission, in person or by agent, and the reorganisation of the province began.

Wise with the wisdom of the mutiny, Lord Canning had decided to maintain and elevate a territorial aristocracy. It was the aristocrats of the Punjab who had saved the situation there; it was the aristocrats of Oudh who had made possible the defence of the Residency. Recent events, wrote the Governor-General, had very much shaken his faith in the Thomasonian system (the system of dishing the barons); the people, whom we had tried to benefit, including those set up against the barons, had ranged themselves under the latter directly British authority was subverted;

part quite foreign to the usual character of Asiatics to have remained faithful to our Government under the shocks to which it was exposed in Oudh * * * The chief commissioner thinks therefore that they ought hardly to be considered as rebels, but rather as honourable enemies, to whom terms, such as they could without loss of dignity accept, should be offered at the termination of the campaign."—Page 1 of Parliamentary Papers, 289 of 1858.

the ancient, indigenous and cherished system of the country was the taluqdari system. For these reasons, and because the barons could assist materially in the restoration of order, a taluqdari settlement should be made. The pendulum had swung its full arc, and as the barons had no assurance that it would not swing again, a *sanad*, or grant, was given to each baron, henceforth to be styled taluqdar conferring on him and his heirs for ever the full proprietary right (on certain conditions) in the villages which he held at annexation. One of these conditions reserved subordinate rights as formerly enjoyed. It was over this condition that the "Oudh controversy" described its queer parabolas.

The controversy was long and strong. The issues were really issues of fact, but only after several years was issue taken on the facts. The taluqdars maintained that the revenue arrangements made in 1855 represented the status of the several parties at the time of annexation, and this was the view of the chief commissioner. Sir John Lawrence, the new

Governor-General, who had no sympathy with Lord Canning's policy,* demanded a departure from the arrangements of the year 1855 on three points. He insisted (1) that the mortgagers of villages mortgaged within twelve years of annexation should have power to redeem such villages; to this the taluqdars agreed without demur; (2) that dispossessed proprietors should be given the best terms that they had secured for themselves within twelve years of annexation; to this the taluqdars would

* Lord Canning foresaw this. "Who is to be my successor?" he wrote to Lord Granville "If Sir John Lawrence, he will go far towards upsetting in a year or two all that I hope to have accomplished in my last three years, both in Oudh and in the Punjab. He will not do it by direct means—I can make that very difficult to any man—but by giving a cold shoulder to all measures for increasing the consequence of, and placing trust in, the native chiefs and gentry *generally* for even he has his particular favourites amongst them), and by his name, the very announcement of which as Governor-General would make more than half of the civil officers in the Punjab and even in Oudh pause in their new zeal. A snub or a sneer from the incoming Governor-General pointed at some unhappy sirdar or taluqdar who had blundered in his duties, would be a signal for consigning the whole class once more to snubs and obstructions, although the system might remain undisturbed on paper, so far as the Home Government knew anything about it."—Life of Lord Granville (1905), Vol. I, page 379.

also have agreed, but for (3) that hereditary tenants should be given rights of occupancy ; to this the taluqdars would never agree. They denied the existence of tenant right in any form before annexation, and stoutly supported by Sir Charles Wingfield, the chief commissioner, they sheltered themselves behind their *sanads* against this revolutionary proposal. After prolonged correspondence, in which both sides slung theories at one another, it was decided, on the suggestion of Sir Henry Maine, to enquire whether occupancy right had in fact existed before annexation ; and in order that the inquiry might be conducted under conditions favourable to the tenants, a Punjab officer of the Thomasonian school was sent to Oudh as financial commissioner to conduct it. The enquiry showed beyond any question that no right of occupancy had ever been claimed or recognised under native rule. At the same time it was stated that tenants were rarely evicted so long as they paid their rent. "There can be no question," added the financial commissioner, "but that thousands of the Oudh

cultivators would under the procedure followed in the settlement of the North-Western Provinces (Agra Province) have been recorded as hereditary cultivators," i.e., occupancy tenants; and on this ground he urged that the wholesale distribution of occupancy right should be repeated in Oudh. But the *sanads* were an obstacle to the enforcement of the Thomasonian theories by these Prussian methods, and an impasse was reached. Sir John Lawrence would not give way and the taluqdars stood firm. At length the "Oudh compromise" was arranged by Sir John Strachey. In exchange for harder terms against under-proprietors who had been proprietors within twelve years of annexation, the taluqdars agreed to give heritable but non-transferable rights of occupancy to tenants who had been proprietors within thirty years of annexation. The compromise was accepted at once by the Government of India and given retrospective effect.*

* The compromise was embodied in Acts XXVI of 1866 and XIX of 1868. The former Act was a set of draft rules sent up

The position and privileges of the taluqdars were eventually confirmed by Act I of 1869. Sir Charles Wingfield attempted without success to tack conditions of primogeniture and entail on to the *sanads*; the majority of the taluqdars strongly resented the proposal to limit their powers of disposing of their property, and the Governor-General accepted their view. Descent to a single heir in case of intestacy was, however, conceded to those taluqdars who wished it (the great majority), power being reserved to them to revert at any time to their personal law.* Important provi-

as the basis of discussion and passed into law straight off in the delight of escaping from an impossible position. So incomplete and undigested were the draft rules, thus unexpectedly made law, that the chief commissioner had to take the unusual step of declaring, by means of a circular to the courts, what the new Act really meant.

At the present day, in the whole of Oudh (including the non-taluqdari portion which was outside the controversy, *i.e.*, about one-third of the province), under-proprietors hold only 439,000 acres and occupancy tenants only 125,000 acres out of some ten millions of acres held under landlords.

* Recently (Act II of 1900) taluqdars have been empowered to make settlements of their estates with due regard to the claims of creditors; but so far only five taluqdars have taken advantage of the Act.

sions were also introduced to prevent death-bed wills and bequests under pressure.

The utmost consideration was shown to the wishes of the taluqdars in all matters connected with the Act. And executive favours went hand in hand with the action of the legislature. The dignity of the taluqdars was protected by departmental orders. They were freed, so far as possible, from the exacting and insolent interference of native subordinates. They were permitted to pay their revenue direct to the deputy commissioner of the district. Courtesy in official dealings with them was strictly enjoined. And the more important and reliable among them were invested with judicial powers, civil, criminal and revenue, within their own estates. The note of the new regime was a living personal administration, as opposed to what was called the dead-level system: justice to be tempered by generous and more than even-handed dealing: local prejudices to be gently handled: conciliation to be preferred to didactic theories of belligerent progress and domineering methods of reform. Such

is Goudh policy, the aristocratic policy, the policy of sympathy and trust. This is the outcome and the sole abiding sequel of controversies which once estranged and separated dear friends, but are now a forgotten delirium.

had been repelled in open fight ; it would now creep up stealthily, as if by night, and undermine Oudh policy. These fears were in the main unfounded. Something of the old personal relations between taluqdars and officers has been lost, not necessarily beyond recall ; something of good government has been sacrificed to a surface uniformity ; but the infusion of new blood has been on the whole well regulated and salutary. Oudh policy has not succumbed. For a while it was in captivity, it drooped but it escaped ; and now, after many days, it has regained its former place and a wider ascendancy. It was young and it was old, and it is young again. The victors have been overcome by the vanquished ; the invaders have been taken into the bosom of the invaded.

What are the causes that have brought about this conspicuous and significant result ? How comes it that thoughtful men on all sides now are asking why the government of Oudh has been so strikingly successful ? Where, they ask, in India can be found more true happiness and ease under British rule, more solid progress,

more unquestioning loyalty? Where such smooth relations between the rulers and the ruled, between the party of order and the party of change? Where a like measure of agrarian peace? Where a more effective combination of old sanctions and young aspiration? What are the peculiar possessions of the province, what institutions, what particular foundations or superstructure, to which it owes its great and growing reputation?

Much must be ascribed to the fact that Oudh is the youngest of the continental provinces: it can well remember native rule. There are still at least a quarter of a million persons in Oudh who can with personal experience and apt illustration tell the story of the old regime and compare the ways of living then and now. What a record of progress the old men can disclose to the rising generation! Fifty years of British rule in Oudh have witnessed the completion of 1,000 miles of railway and 4,000 miles of broad high ways, besides many thousand miles of open track. The province now contains 3,000 educational

institutions, and 120 hospitals and dispensaries, where free medical aid and free medicine are given to all-comers. Stipendiary courts of justice now number 162, of which 51 are civil and 111 are criminal; and in addition there are 17 honorary civil judges and 112 honorary magistrates. Within the last five and thirty years the cultivated area has increased from about 7,000,000 to about 9,250,000 acres; the number of masonry irrigation wells from 73,000 to 157,000.* The money which formerly flowed into Lucknow now flows back in large measure to the districts.† All around may be discovered the symptoms of slowly advancing material prosperity. Live-stock is increasing; markets are growing: the standard of comfort is rising slowly in the people's own way. Among the

* Were the figures of fifty years ago available, a far larger increase would be shown, for the old reports show that there was a rapid development of agriculture during the first years after annexation.

† This statement requires perhaps some qualification. It is a complaint of Oudh people that, although the province was annexed solely in their interest, only about 1½ crores (including heavy military charges) are spent in the province out of a revenue of some 2½ crores.

poorest brazen vessels have displaced earthen pots; people who used to travel unshod now wear shoes; umbrellas, formerly reserved for the highest, are now found in almost every village—trifles it may seem to the philanthropic eye but solid assets to the very poor—and, what is more considerable because more general, the scale of expenditure on litigation, caste entertainments and marriage ceremonial is growing apace. There are, indeed, critics who decry the solvents of an old morality frost-bound in custom, the exuberance of the meaner vices and unmanly crimes of peace, theft, adultery and fraud; there are those again who look back wistfully to the “bankruptcy court of the jungle” and the ever-green hopes of anarchy; to some, a larger number, the rise of the lowest spells the degradation of the highest, and the diffusion of large incomes conveys the notion of a spread of poverty. But these are the minority. Oudh is still grateful for British rule, and its gratitude enters into and pervades the political and social atmosphere.

But the mainspring of Oudh contentment must be sought and will be found elsewhere. The preservation of its landed aristocracy, the ancient, indigenous and cherished system of the country, as Lord Canning truly called it, is the secret of its strength. For Oudh is a Hindu province, a watershed of brahmanism;* and the pivot of the brahmanic polity is the position and power of the chhatttri raja. The place of the raja in a living society has been drawn by a master hand; and the appreciation of it is so important for a proper understanding of Oudh, that the passage may be quoted in full.

"If the Hindu chiefs only have been mentioned, it must not be forgotten that they were nothing more than the highest point of a very complex structure. In considering their position, it would be erroneous to compare them with either the patriarch of an eastern tribe or the chieftain of a sept or clan. In their relations with their peasantry the family tie entered not at all. Either they had very few blood relations living in dependence on them, or, as was more common, the

* Out of a total population at the 1901 census of 12,833,077 no fewer than 1,393,012 were brahmans and 665,400 were chhattris (rajputs).

younger branches of their families threw off allegiance altogether and established separate States. In the complete absence of any pretence of common origin with the mass of the people, they most nearly resembled the feudal lords of mediæval Europe. But here again the resemblance is only superficial. What made the Oudh Barons so strong is that they were a necessary element in the religious system of the country. Their race had been set apart by immemorial tradition and the sanction of all sacred literature as the wielders and representatives of Hindu power. The Chhatti ruler was as indispensable as the Brahman priest, and his might and magnificence were—and are still—gloried in by the people as the visible manifestation of their national prosperity. With his destruction the national system is broken up, and it is this fact which commands for him the unquestioning obedience, and it may almost be said the enthusiastic affection of his subjects—an obedience and affection which can never be conciliated by the best rulers on a foreign race and religion. His position was then if its essential qualities that of the national king, however small his territories may have been, and his functions were distinctly royal. He was the natural receiver of the share of the cultivator's produce which formed the principal source of revenue ; he assessed and collected all the other taxes within his domain, the transit and ferry dues, the

imposts on bazaars, and the fees paid by the owners of stills and looms. * * * * Right up to annexation we find the Rajas, who had then become taluqdars, still collecting the minor taxes all over their domains, even in cases where they had lost nearly every one of their ancestral villages. Besides being the receiver of the revenue, the Hindu chief called out the militia of his territory for war at his own sole will and with an authority which was never disputed. He apportioned out the waste lands to tenants for cultivation, decided the suits of his subjects in his cutcherry, and enjoyed, besides, a number of varying rights in wild produce resembling the rights attached to an English manor." *

This is the dominant institution of the country ; and who shall measure its vitality ! Bruised and buffeted in the past by the central power, torn asunder by family feud and local faction, it has lasted from the dawn of history, persisting when not resisting, and perpetually reviving as if in obedience to some self-preserving instinct in society. This is the institution which has been conserved in Oudh and adapted to modern conditions The continued

* Mr. Benett's Introduction to the Oudh gazetteer of 1877, a classic authority, as is also his report on the Gonda settlement.

influence of the raja is the key-stone of the Oudh political and social structure, and the source of its unrivalled solidarity.

In the province of Agra also a landed aristocracy was the ancient and indigenous institution of the country, although in the plains between the Ganges and the Jumna, the highway of Mahomedan invasions, the institution lost much ground and in some places altogether disappeared. The conquerors, who derived their revenue system through the Caliphate from the Roman census as elaborated in the eastern provinces and Egypt, and informed it with the Islamic doctrine of the equality of man, made short work, where they had the strength to do so, of the petty kingships which preserved and consolidated the national feeling of the conquered. Large tracts were accordingly without a raja when the British came. In the military operations at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, some rajas were crushed; a larger number were shovelled away in the confiscations of the early settlement proceedings. For

the British Government then stood forth as raja, preserving or placing a sort of yeomanry on the land. The policy was doubtless wise at a time when the power of the British had not been consolidated, and the raja's fort was a cave of Adullam in an unsettled country. But the policy is not successful now ; nor is it likely to be permanent. The administration, or the best part of it, is too remote, too absorbed, to fill the raja's place ; it cannot come down among the people, and it is driven to lodge authority with low-grade subordinates, needy and greedy, "the feet of clay." Already a current of change is in the air. From the rubble of shattered theories and tumbledown enthusiasms the survivals of the old aristocracy have once more raised their heads—for many rajas still survive and big estates are being put together—and now they are rising to the crest of a movement, variously styled a reaction and a revival, but which is in reality a recrudescence of the old persistent type of polity, which all that is national in the two provinces seems to require.

This movement has so far progressed that the aristocracies of the two provinces are holding out hands to one another and discussing terms of union. One may hope that this union will soon be effected, for it will be a source of strength to the government and to the people. Paradox though it may seem, the aristocratic policy, the ancient and indigenous policy, is the modern and liberal policy. Lesser men have laughed at John Bright because he, the tribune of the people, once pleaded the cause of the barons of Oudh. But the instinct of great men in politics, as in all affairs, is a safer guide than the catchwords of the hour ; and John Bright's instinct did not lead him astray. In reality an aristocratic policy is the necessary complement of a bureaucratic system like the Indian, which secures personal freedom and encourages political aspirations. The problem of problems to-day is—how to graft the principles of politics upon an essentially bureaucratic system ? For a new spirit is abroad, a busy, restless, roving independent spirit, a spirit of enquiry and change ; in the ooze of an ever-spreading material

civilisation movements are springing up, outside the government, and quite beyond its control. Where administration in the old sense of the word has been sufficient hitherto, government in the modern sense of the term is needed now. Yet the masses of the people are neither political nor capable of politics; they require a mediator between their rulers and themselves; and this mediator they find in the landed aristocracy. And many moderate men of the educated class, disconnected from the land, are rallying to the landed aristocracy, partly from traditional feelings of respect, partly because they hope that as men of the land take to western education, and men of western education get on to the land, the landed aristocracy will coalesce with the aristocracy of intellect and wealth. And he would be bold who should deny that this could ever be. For beneath the surface fixity of Indian institutions there is great elasticity and receptivity of social fictions; in the old figure, the waters are ever flowing, though the image on the waters is ever the same. An institution which can

draw to a Mahomedan landowner many of the sanctions of a chhatti raja is not likely to be found wanting in ductility when the need for expansion is felt. Outside the big cities, where municipal institutions are growing up on western lines, the landed aristocracy affords the only possible foundation for a devolution of political power. Only through an aristocracy can there be a thorough infusion of the political spirit in the treatment of public affairs.

This conclusion is illustrated by the course and consequences of agrarian legislation in the two provinces. In Oudh since the establishment of the taluqdari system the treatment of agrarian questions has always been political. Sir John Lawrence, as Governor-General, tried, indeed, to force new tenant rights upon the province, on the *a priori* grounds which had been sufficient in the sister province; but he was unable to carry his point against the talukdars, and a sober rent law, suited to existing conditions, found its way into the statute book. In 1886 some revision and development of this enactment was found neces-

sary, and thanks to the skill and conciliatory influence of Sir Alfred Lyall, a substantial measure of reform which satisfied the claims of the time, was passed with the acquiescence of the taluqdars. Statutory leases for seven years were given to all tenants, with certain restrictions, not easy to enforce, on the enhancement of rent. The taluqdars were trusted, and they have not belied the trust. At the last revision of settlement it was found that the rents on taluqdari estates were lower by about one-fourth than rents on other properties—one more proof, if proof were needed, that the possession of power does not necessarily involve the abuse of it, and that the best way to secure good treatment for the tenants is to be considerate to the landlords. Nowhere in India is there a more contented or more prosperous tenantry than in Oudh.

In Agra, on the other hand, the treatment of agrarian questions has been essentially bureaucratic. The agrarian system was based on general theories, with little regard to existing

conditions, or to the claims or wishes* of any class, by officials who in their own country had no hereditary connection with the land. With the best intentions grave mistakes were made. The greatest revenue officer whom the province has produced since the mutiny was so unsettled by the results of his own handiwork, the application of the Bengal Act (X of 1859) to the Agra province—the Act gave a right of occupancy on twelve years' continuous holding of the same land to any tenant—that he demanded in insistent language its early abrogation. Yet the Act was not amended for years, and the

* In the course of the Oudh tenant right enquiry an examination was made of the records of pargana Nizamabad in the Azamgarh district of the Agra province. Out of 426 villages the tenants claimed rights of occupancy in only 16. In 156 villages the tenants denied the existence of such rights, but were decreed them notwithstanding, *because they were too ignorant to know what their rights were!* The following orders were cited:—Mauza Ekrapore: "The *assamees* of this village have, in brief, recorded that they have no rights whatever; they pay rent for such land as they cultivate. These *assamees* assert no rights, but they are not aware what rights properly belong to their position." Mauza Jajupore and Chedahari: "The cultivators are hereditary. They assert no rights in their lands or village, but they are so ignorant that they do not know what their rights consist of."

public had no voice in its amendment when it came. Indeed, it may be said, that in matters affecting landlord and tenants, the Agra public were consulted for the first time by Sir Antony MacDonnell. Large concessions were then made, somewhat difficult to carry out, but leading half way—and statesmanship could then no further go—towards the provisions of the Oudh rent law. The best opinion seems now to be veering round to the view that the ultimate solution of the Agra problem must be the abolition of the provisions under which rights adverse to the landlord can be gained by mere possession at his will, and the gift all round to unprotected tenants of statutory leases for a term of years. This is the Oudh solution worked out twenty years ago in dealing with an aristocracy in a political spirit. It rests upon the custom of the country and is elastic at will, for when further protection is needed for the tenant the term of the statutory lease can be lengthened.

An even more valuable consequence of the political treatment of questions in Oudh is the development of a generous system for the

valuation and assessment of land revenue. The Oudh settlements are the best thing of their kind yet accomplished in India. They rest on absolutely certain data drawn from the rent-rolls of the taluqdars, and they were carried out on broad political lines. They were commenced, indeed, in the cold arithmetical spirit of the old Agra system; the land was assessed, not the turban; the sacred principle of half assets to the State was maintained, and the assets were pitched high; with the result that an enhancement was reached which the proprietors could not reasonably be expected to pay. But realising the political importance of the settlements Sir Charles Crosthwaite and Sir Antony MacDonnell insisted upon a policy of moderation. Under the able direction of Mr. Benett, and afterwards of Mr. Hooper, a settlement was concluded, which worked close to the soil and regarded things with the eyes of the people. Analysis of living rental systems* led to just and necessary allowances in the valuation—for short collections, for the customs of the country,

* Anyone interested in the subject of rental systems in this part of the country will find, in a few pages in the settlement reports of the Kheri and Sitapur districts, an analysis of the rents prevailing from the prairies on the Nepal border to the intense cultivation near Lucknow, the determining causes of rent, and the passage from one system to another.

e.g., the privileges in their rent (about 25 per cent) which high caste tenants enjoy, for precarious grain-rented loads, for improvements, and so on; and when the constructive imagination of the settlement officer had exhausted itself in the processes of valuation, something less than half of the valuation, as little as one-third or one-quarter, was taken if the enhancement was more than the people could stand. Moreover any considerable enhancement was graduated by periods of quinquennial progressions.*

* The fiscal results may be tabulated as follows:—

	Area. (Acres, thousands.)		Rent. (Rupees, thousands.)	Rate per acre. Rs.
Recorded tenants' cash rent.	...	5,083	27,767	5.46
Valuation of tenants' cash rented land.		5,028	26,894	5.34
Valuation of land not cash rented.	...	2,972	11,064	3.72
		8,000	37,958	4.74
Added for manorial dues, etc.	...		193	
Deducted for improvements and allowance for proprietary farms of poor proprietors.	...		687	
NET VALUATION	37,464	
REVISED REVENUE	17,402	

The revised revenue takes 46.45 of the valuation and gives an enhancement on the expiring revenue of 37 lakhs or 27.31 per cent. Moderation increased as the settlement progressed, and the later settlements were more generous than these figures indicate.

The broad political imaginative attitude, the ripe flesh and blood views of agrarian facts which characterised the later Oudh settlements, marked a long advance in settlement methods, and anticipated the liberal progressive policy lately announced by the Government of India.

Other examples of the successful treatment of public questions upon a political basis can be found in the history of Oudh during the last fifty years; but more important than any particular achievement is the feeling of confidence established in the minds of the public. The knowledge that the Government will meet the taluqdars half way on any important question creates for the public an atmosphere of security; and the knowledge that the wishes of the taluqdars will carry great weight with the government necessarily induces officials to find out what their wishes are. Sir William Muir, himself an Agra man, used to advise young men that they would learn more about the people during a year's service in Oudh than they would during ten years' service in the sister province; and

certainly in Oudh it is easier to see things with the people's eyes, and to avoid any tendency to grow into an earthly providence, clever over the heads of the people, philanthropic at the expense of others, and better informed than the people themselves as to what they want. To the Englishman, who loves his birth-right and carries thoughts of freedom with him to the east, there is something in the atmosphere of Oudh which makes him feel at home. The interest of work is widened by the knowledge that behind anomalies, which almost daily come to notice, there lies a story of struggle and compromise between contending forces of another generation ; and the outlook of the administrator is broadened by dealing with shrewd and influential men, who have in a high degree the instinct of affairs, and can assist him in a way that no police or revenue officials can do.

Not the least of the advantages of Oudh policy is its influence on the social relations of European and Indian gentlemen. The social problem is perhaps of more importance at the

present time than any set of political problems. The difficulties of social fusion between peoples of different creed and colour are especially great, when upon the one side ladies lead society and upon the other side they are kept in strict seclusion. And the difficulties of the European official, for whom impartiality between rival factions is at once his first duty and the source of his influence, are augmented by the fact that members of the one great community can feed with him, while members of the other great community cannot. But the time has passed when the question can be left with a bidding to Ephraim not to envy Judah, and a bidding to Judah not to vex Ephraim. The difficulties must be faced; and if the old English spirit survives, in some time the difficulties will be overcome. Some appearances to the contrary notwithstanding, the points of contact between Europeans and Indians are being multiplied, and this in itself will bring about a better understanding. There is universal and eternal truth in the Talmud allegory of the figure in the mist upon the mountain side, which first

appeared to be a monster, and on a nearer view a man, and when it was approached turned out to be a brother. The treatment of Indian gentlemen, as if they were English gentlemen, the treatment which they expect and deserve, has established many friendships unbroken and unbreakable, in Agra and in Oudh. But in Oudh particularly the quality of friendship is not strained. The friendships between English officials and taluqdars are a tradition ; they rest on mutual sympathy and trust ; they rest also on memories which no Englishman will willingly let die. "It is impossible," wrote Mr. Benett, and none ever had in greater degree the capacity for attaching Indian friends, "it is impossible to think badly of a race who, from among the dozen chiefs of a single district, could produce in one season of national convulsion two such eminent instances of loyalty and devotion to opposite sides as the present (now late) Maharaja of Balrampur and the late Raja Debi Baksh Singh of Gonda—the one who risked his property and his life to save a handful of English friends, and remained their firm protector when it seemed certain

that their cause was lost; the other who did not join the standard of national revolt till he had escorted the treasure and the officials of a Government he hated to a place of safety, who was the last in the field when fighting was possible, and who, though offered an honourable reception and the whole of his immense estates by his conquerors, elected to sacrifice position and wealth and die a starving exile in Nepal rather than desert his defeated mistress. Their fortunes were different, but their chivalrous honour the same."

And it is in Lucknow, the beautiful ever-green city, the most European of Indian cities and yet most Indian, the home and temple of the aristocratic policy, the happy meeting ground of old and new, that the grand work of integration seems destined to begin. In the shadow of the shot-ridden but proud and unconquerable old Residency, where English and loyal Indians fighting side by side have won imperishable renown by the grave of Sir Henry Lawrence, from whose company none ever rose without a loftier view of Indian character, the seeds of coalition

will find congenial soil. The visitor to the Residency, who muses on the past and the future, may note that upon the spot where the enemy's assault was hottest twin hospitals for Europeans and Indians have been erected by Oudh's premier taluqdar, the Maharaja of Balrampur ; and as the sun sets over the great city, lingering awhile on the trim lawns and battered walls which link the present with the past, a strong hope may come to him, like a distant call to prayer, that old wounds may soon be healed, and old causes of disunion may disappear, and that Englishmen and Indians, knit together by loyalty to their beloved Sovereign, may be as brothers before the altar of the empire, bearing the empire's burden, and sharing its inestimable privileges, and, it may be, adding something not yet seen or dreamt of to its world-wide and weather-beaten fame.